

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we now are in about the sixth month of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. We have over 11 million people who have received health care—who previously had not been able to receive it—either through the private exchanges, which have signed up 4 million people all across the country; through the expansion of Medicaid, which has reached millions more; or through all of the young people who are able to stay on their parents' plans until they are 26 years old.

Taxpayers are saving money. In fact, CBO has redone their estimates for the 10-year period after the passage of the Affordable Care Act to suggest that we are now going to save \$1.2 trillion on Federal health care spending, in large part because of the reforms in the Affordable Care Act.

Across this country millions of Americans who had been kept out of the ranks of the insured because of a preexisting condition now have access to health care, and tens of millions of seniors are paying less for their health care because they get checkups for free and they are able to access prescription drugs for 50 percent or less than the original cost when they reach that doughnut hole. So the Affordable Care Act is changing lives.

When you reorder one-sixth of the American economy, there are going to be bumps along the road. No one should come to the floor—even those of us who are the most vocal proponents of the law—and suggest there are not going to be some people who are not going to have the perfect experience. Of course there is no excuse for the way in which the Web site operated for the first several months. But it is time for proponents of this law to tell the real story, and the real story is that the Affordable Care Act is working. It is working for millions of Americans who now have access to health care. It is working for taxpayers who are spending less than ever before as you look at annual rates of growth in Federal health care spending.

Today and this week my colleagues and I are focusing on the benefits for one specific group of patients, one specific set of families all across this country, and those are patients and families dealing with cancer diagnoses.

So I will start this off—I will be joined later by Senator STABENOW and some of my other colleagues—and I want to talk first about a family in Indiana. I will talk about some families in Connecticut as well, but the Treinens have a story that is, frankly, not unique. They had insurance and they thought they had really good insurance. They didn't pay too much attention to the lifetime cap of \$1 million that was in their insurance policy because they just figured, as a relatively healthy family, there was no way they were ever going to spend \$1 million on health care over the course of their time on that insurance plan.

But as millions of families across this country know, cancer can interrupt your plans, and that is what happened to the Treinens. Their doctors diagnosed their teenage son Michael in 2007 with an aggressive form of leukemia. The treatment called for ten doses of chemotherapy that cost \$10,000 per dose. A 56-day stay in an Intensive Care Unit alone cost about \$400,000. So Michael and his family reached that \$1 million lifetime maximum in less than 1 year, and it was then left to this brave family to go out and raise money in solicitations in their neighborhood, in their community and all across the country, which miraculously allowed them to bring in \$865,000 in 6 days to keep their son's treatment going.

Needless to say, that avenue is not available to every family. But due to their ingenuity and their passion, the Treinens were able to raise almost \$1 million from private donors in order to keep their son's treatment going. But the story doesn't end well, however, for the Treinens. Even though money came in from all over the United States, and as far away as places such as Germany, Michael's cancer eventually stopped responding to chemotherapy and he died May 25, before he could receive the transplant they all hoped would save his life.

The reality is that insurance companies have been getting away with this practice for years—lifetime or annual limits that for 105 million Americans were preventing them from receiving care when they really got sick. That is what insurance really is supposed to be for. For those of us who buy insurance, we get it in the hopes that should we get very sick, that insurance plan will be there to help us. But with annual and lifetime limits, when people got really sick, especially with cancer diagnoses, that help wasn't there.

Tom Bocaccio, who is a retired police officer in Newington, CT, is still dealing with the consequences of lifetime caps. His wife past away after an 8-year struggle with adrenal cancer. After her death, the husband she left behind was saddled with a \$1.5 million bill because the Bocaccios, over that 8-year period of fighting cancer, had exceeded their lifetime cap. That changes Tom's life in a myriad of ways. He has lost his wife, and there is no way to describe the pain that comes with that, especially after that brave, courageous battle of almost a decade, but now his entire life is upended by the fact that he has a \$1.5 million bill he has to pay, and he doesn't have the resources to do that.

So first and foremost, for cancer patients all across this country, 105 million Americans no longer face lifetime limits on health care benefits. For cancer patients, not only does that deliver financial security, but it delivers mental and psychological security as well—to know in the midst of dealing with this diagnosis and all the pain that comes with confronting this disease head on, they do not also have to worry

about skimping on treatments, about cutting back on hospital stays that might harm the recovery or treatment of the patient simply because they are trying not to get above that annual or lifetime limit.

The benefits to cancer patients extend beyond just that protection on lifetime and annual limits. In addition, cancer patients are going to be able to keep their health care because of the ban on discrimination against families and individuals with preexisting conditions.

I have spoken about the Berger family many times on this floor. They are a family that explains exactly why we need this protection. The Berbers, from Meriden, CT, had a son who was diagnosed with cancer during the 2-week period in which the husband, through which the family had insurance, didn't have a job. He switched jobs, and during that 2-week period in which he was waiting to get insurance through his new job, their son was diagnosed with cancer. The new insurance policy decided it was a preexisting condition. The Berbers had to pay every dime of that treatment and they lost everything. They lost their savings, their home. Their lives were transformed because of the misfortune of having a cancer diagnosis at the wrong time.

No family anywhere in the country dealing with a cancer diagnosis will ever have to go through what the Berbers went through because here ever after the law of this land says that if you have a preexisting condition, you cannot be discriminated against.

There are all sorts of other benefits that matter, whether it be the fact you don't have to pay for preventive health care any longer so you can get a check-up without cost or clinical trials are now covered which many cancer patients enjoy the benefit of. Life changed for cancer patients and families dealing with cancer when the Affordable Care Act passed.

Senator STABENOW, myself, and others had a press conference earlier this week in which we heard the story of David Weis, a senior at Georgetown University who was diagnosed days before his 19th birthday with thyroid lymphatic cancer. David talks about the difference the Affordable Care Act makes for him, not only in financial terms but in terms of how he thinks about his future. David now can go out and get a job, search for and pursue a career based on what he wants to do with his life rather than based on what job will provide him with adequate benefits to treat his cancer should it reoccur.

I have a constituent who talks about it the same way. He was 14 when he was diagnosed with a form of leukemia. He went through treatment for over 3 years. His family now knows that with the Affordable Care Act—because he is only covered on his mom's policy until he is 26—after he ages out of his mom's plan, he will be able to pursue his dreams no matter what kind of insurance plan his prospective employer has.

What we have learned over the years is there is a connection between the mind and the body. If you are stressed out about things such as how you are going to pay for treatment of your disease, it does have an effect on your body's ability to fight that disease. Unfortunately, for millions of families dealing with cancer, their treatment has been restrained, their body's recovery has been curtailed because they are obsessively—and appropriately—always worried about what will happen if their insurance runs out.

The ACA says never again. No family will have to worry because that will be guaranteed, and discriminatory policies of annual and lifetime limits disappear.

I will end with the notion that it is important to remember every time our Republican friends come down to the floor and talk about how awful they believe the Affordable Care Act is, their proposal is to return cancer patients and families dealing with cancer back to the reality in which they had lifetime limits which ended their coverage—for this family I talked about from Indiana, after only several months—and they want to go back to the days in which families such as the Bergers lose everything, their savings, their home, because of a mistimed cancer diagnosis.

This week the House of Representatives voted for the 50th time to repeal all or part of the Affordable Care Act. I was a Member of that body for 6 years, and I probably participated in about 40 of those votes. Despite the fact I heard lots of my Republican friends come down to the floor and say: We are voting to repeal and replace, they never voted once to replace the Affordable Care Act because their agenda is not to replace it. Their agenda is simply to repeal it and go back to the days in which cancer patients were treated with this kind of carelessness.

Our colleagues on the Democratic side who voted for the Affordable Care Act understand there are places where it can be better. We understand there is a process of perfecting it. But we understand—because of families such as the Barrows, because of families such as the Weises, the Treinens, and the Bergers—for cancer patients and the families who love them, they know the ACA is working, and they know they never want to go back to the days in which their lives were put in jeopardy by a health care system which didn't work for them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague from Connecticut for his passion and his wonderful advocacy for people who just want to know they have health care for themselves and their families, which is pretty basic. I thank Senator MURPHY for his vigilance, for speaking out and being here and talking about what is at stake.

There is an ad on TV which says something like: New car, \$30,000; new house, \$150,000; peace of mind, priceless. What we are talking about in terms of access to affordable health care, getting what you are paying for, knowing you can't get dropped just because you get sick, knowing your child with juvenile diabetes can get care even though it would be viewed as a preexisting condition, is peace of mind.

I can't imagine how scary it must be to sit in a doctor's office and have a doctor come in and say: You have cancer. You have leukemia. You have breast cancer. This is happening to people every single day, and there are many thoughts going through their minds at that time. At some point they will turn to the doctor and want to talk about: What kind of treatment do I need? Is it going to be covered? How do I get it? What is going to happen?

One in every eight women in America will develop invasive breast cancer during their lives. It is not a statistic. These are real women, such as my sister-in-law, such as many other people I know. They are our daughters, our sisters, our mothers. Men as well are being given diagnoses of breast cancer—our friends. They now have the peace of mind of knowing they are going to be able to get the care they need at an affordable price and they can't be dropped. There is no cap on how long they are going to be able to get treatment, and that is priceless.

I will share a true story about a cancer survivor whose life has been changed thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Her name is Chris G.

Chris found a lump in her breast. Every woman can imagine the thoughts which must have gone through Chris's mind. The fear must have been unimaginable. It was even worse for Chris because her husband lost his job and they didn't have insurance—the worst of all possible situations. Because she didn't have insurance, she couldn't see a doctor to get the tests she needed. Chris didn't ignore her lump. You can't ignore something like that. It is on your mind every single minute of every single day. But at that moment she didn't feel she could do anything about it because without insurance, if Chris went to a doctor, her breast cancer of course would count as a preexisting condition and then she would never be able to get insurance.

But now, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Chris and millions of women like her can get the affordable insurance they need, and marketplaces where insurance companies now have to compete for her business give their best price for her business. These are good policies which cover treatment women need to beat cancer and survive. But before the Affordable Care Act, cancer would haunt these women for the rest of their lives as insurance companies labeled their survival a preexisting condition—no more.

Thanks to the ACA, millions of cancer survivors similar to Chris have

peace of mind—priceless. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, millions of women have access to mammograms and other preventive services. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, millions of women similar to Chris will never have to worry about annual or lifetime limits on their coverage, not being told: OK, cancer. You have eight visits. That is it. I hope it works. That is it. No more.

In fact, the ACA flips that around. It says cancer patients such as Chris will never be asked to spend more than a set amount of money in total on their treatment. Once they hit that number, the insurance company has to pick up the rest of the cost of the treatments. For women fighting cancer, this law is a lifesaver.

There are 7,000 women in my State of Michigan alone who will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer this year. This is why it is so important for women to get covered, to sign up before March 31, so they can have the health care they need this year. This is literally a lifesaving day on March 31.

Once you are covered, you get no-cost preventive services. So you can go in, get the checkup, get the mammogram, get other cancer screenings, and not have out-of-pocket costs. You get again the peace of mind of knowing you are not going to go broke because of health care. Even if you get diagnosed with cancer, it is not: Do I get the treatments I need for breast cancer or do I have a home for my family? Do I go bankrupt or do I try to survive through treatments? Those are not the choices available to women and families anymore, and there is access to your doctor instead of using the emergency room.

One of the fallacies of health care reform is this idea of somehow we ignore when people get sick and somehow we don't pay for it. Yet we all know people who don't have insurance use emergency rooms. I think it is interesting to note there is a proposal, in Georgia, where the Governor has said: The way to fix the problem with emergency rooms is to say you don't have to treat people. That is one way to do it, to say we are not going to treat people who are sick, who are in a car accident or have a heart attack.

The other way is through the Affordable Care Act, where we say: Instead of people using emergency rooms without insurance and then shifting all the costs onto everybody with insurance—which is what happens now—we pay for it. We all pay for it. Instead of that happening, we will set up a way for people to take personal responsibility for their health care and create a way to make it as affordable and competitive as possible. Then people will be able to go to their doctor instead of the emergency room and be able to get the treatment they need on an ongoing basis.

As women such as Chris can attest, cancer sneaks up on you. You can't predict it. You can't avoid it. This is not one of those events where you can

say just buck it up and don't get cancer. We don't want those costs, so just don't get sick.

We all know how ridiculous that is. Yet in some ways this is sort of what we keep hearing in some fashion.

The reality is you can't predict it. You can't avoid it. The only thing you can do is survive it, which millions of women are now doing who have access to the treatments and health care they need. This is why this new health care reform law is so important.

It is two things. It is health insurance reform, making sure those of us who have insurance are getting what we are paying for—as we have said before, can't get dropped, don't put artificial limits on the number of treatments. So it is insurance reform, so you are getting what you are paying for—what you thought you were paying for. It is also creating a way for more affordable insurance by creating a marketplace where insurance companies then have to bid for your business and provide you the best bid possible. We have competition to bring the costs down. I know for Chris, I know for women in my own family, and I know for people across Michigan, the peace of mind that comes with that is, in fact, priceless.

The debate on the other side is about taking that all away—not making it better, not fixing it. Medicare over the year has been improved. Medicaid has been improved. Social Security has been improved. Everything that is worth doing gets started and then has to be worked on to get improved. We are committed to doing that. But there are 50 votes now happening in the House to take it all away and to go back to saying good luck. If you are a woman, good luck. By the way, being a woman is probably viewed as being a preexisting condition. Trying to find insurance? Good luck. Good luck trying to get what you need from the insurance companies. Peace of mind is worth fighting for, and that is what the Affordable Care Act is all about.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

SAVANNAH HARBOR EXPANSION PROJECT

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss promises made and promises broken, of hypocrisy and politics, of the difference between the photo op speeches, press releases, and real action.

Let me start at the beginning, for those who are just joining us in this decade-and-a-half battle. The Panama Canal is about halfway through a \$5.25 billion expansion which will accommodate the larger post-Panamax vessels that are too large to transit the current Panama Canal. These new post-Panamax ships are the length of aircraft carriers. From the waterline they are 190 feet tall, or nearly twice the height of the Lincoln Memorial. The ships can carry as many as 12,000 containers, or translated into TVs, a million flat screen TVs.

Thus, the United States must be prepared to accept these larger vessels by 2015, when the Panama Canal expansion is complete. The Port of Savannah in Savannah, Georgia, is the second busiest U.S. container exporter, handling 13.2 million tons in exports in 2012 alone. It is the busiest port on the East Coast. In order to accommodate the new larger ships at the Port of Savannah, the Savannah river must be deepened from its current depth of 42 feet to 47 feet.

Georgia has been working on the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project for well in excess of a dozen years. Environmental studies have been completed, permits have been issued, and state funding has been secured for 40 percent of the project. It has the support of every Member of the Georgia congressional delegation and every single leader in our State, Republican as well as Democrat. This is a unifying bipartisan project for us, one that will support hundreds of thousands of jobs each year while generating billions of dollars in revenue for the entire southeastern United States.

Until recently we had the support of the Obama administration as well. After all, this is exactly the type of project the President has been touting as the secret to our economic recovery. He even included the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project as one of the four port projects in his 2012 “We Can't Wait” initiative.

Vice President BIDEN visited the Port of Savannah along with Senator ISAKSON, myself, and Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx last year, and in comments while at the Port of Savannah to the public that was gathered, he stated: “We are going to get this done, come hell or high water.”

Acting U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank visited the port in 2012, calling SHEP a national bipartisan priority for this administration. Former Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood visited the Port of Savannah in 2011 promising to find funding for the port expansion. In fact, in every conversation I have had with various administration officials since this project started in 1997, I have been assured that we would find a way to get this project done.

So you can see how confused I was to learn this week that the administration is now stonewalling us on this project by not including the project in its 2015 budget. It is baffling to see this administration choose to ignore a congressional statute passed just 6 weeks ago that cleared all remaining obstructions to moving forward with this project.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 gave clear direction to the administration to begin construction on the SHEP project and to request the necessary funding. The administration's position as evidenced by the Office of Management and Budget is that they will ignore the clear guidance from Congress and will instead request

more funding for unnecessary additional studies this year. Apparently the administration would rather pay lip service to Georgians than deliver on their promises. The State of Georgia has done its part, and I commend Governor Deal and the Georgia legislature, who have committed \$265 million to start construction. We just need the Federal Government to get out of our way so Georgia can begin construction on this very vital project.

The administration can repair some of the damage that has been done by finalizing the agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Georgia Ports Authority so that they can begin construction with State money that under the leadership of Governor Deal is now going to be available. Without any Federal funding at this point in time, the State is willing to move forward.

I urge the administration to move ahead with the securing of that agreement between the Army Corps of Engineers and the Ports Authority, and let's begin construction.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I seek recognition to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, we have now engaged in a debate over the last couple of weeks over whether we should begin to expand a massive exportation of American natural gas—our own natural gas—to put it out onto the world market as a way of helping Ukraine deal with Russia.

This whole notion is constantly being invoked, like an incantation—a talisman—that somehow or other this is some kind of a magic bullet that will help solve the problems in Ukraine. In fact, it really is nothing more than another aggregation encyclopedically of discredited notions, nostrums, that have no relationship to the reality of the global energy marketplace. These are actual arguments being made, false premises that do not, in fact, have any likelihood of having any substantial impact on the totality of the Ukrainian situation.

Let me give a few facts as a way of dealing with where we are right now. The United States has already approved five export terminals that could send 4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas abroad. How much natural gas is that? Let me tell my colleagues: It is more than twice what Ukraine uses in a year. The United States has already

committed to doing that. More than a quarter of all of the gas Europe imports in a year would be ascribable to the amount of natural gas the United States has already approved. It would be nearly as much as every single U.S. home uses yearly. That is how much natural gas is part of the already approved export terminals in this country.

The Department of Energy found that exporting 4.4 trillion cubic feet—a level we will reach within the next approved export terminal—could raise the price of domestic natural gas up to 54 percent. That could mean that American consumers would pay \$2.50 more per thousand cubic feet. That translates into—listen to this number, I say to my colleagues—a \$62 billion energy tax every year on American consumers and businesses.

What do I mean by energy tax? I mean that but for that exportation, consumers' bills, corporations' bills, would be \$62 billion lower per year over the next 10 years. Can we imagine the debate here in the Senate over increasing \$62 billion worth of taxes on Americans in one year? We would come to a standstill if we had that kind of debate. But because it is part of energy policy, people assume it is something that is outside the purview of what should be a great national debate which we are having.

Let me tell my colleagues, low-cost domestic natural gas has allowed the United States to add—let me say this—530,000 manufacturing jobs since 2010, according to Dow Chemical. If low prices continue, we could add 5 million more jobs in the manufacturing sector by 2020. Who says this? America's Energy Advantage. Who is in that organization? Dow, Alcoa, Nucor, and other major corporations. To what do they relate the manufacturing revival in our country? Low prices. Energy that gives them a reason to return the manufacturing jobs from overseas.

Except for the cost of labor, what is the single largest component in a manufacturing job? The cost of energy. The lower it is, the more likely the manufacturing company will have the jobs here in America. If we increase the price by 54 percent or more, which is what many people here are now proposing, we reduce the incentive for a manufacturer to create those new jobs here in the United States.

Let me give my colleagues another fact. Every dollar invested in domestic manufacturing creates \$8 in finished products. Manufacturing is at the heart of who we are as a country. This is something that right now is a discussion we should have in this country—the relationship between low-cost energy and the new manufacturing jobs we want to see. We can generate that economic value here in America, but if we send our natural gas overseas, that same kind of manufacturing future can be constructed in China. Let's have that debate here in our country.

Last month the U.S. chemical industry topped \$100 billion in new invest-

ments as a result of low-cost U.S. natural gas. According to the American Chemistry Council, those 148 new factories and expanded projects could generate \$81 billion per year in new chemical industry output and 637,000 new jobs in manufacturing here in the United States by the year 2023.

Now let's go to, in my opinion, some of the complete canards that are thrown out about where this natural gas will go if it is put out into the free market. First of all, let me say this: We are not Russia. We are not Venezuela. We are not a Communist country where the government controls where energy goes. No. We are a capitalist country. We are proud of it. The decision as to where natural gas is going to go is going to be made by the CEOs of oil and gas companies in our country, and they are going to send it to where they can get the highest dollar. Let me say this right now: The highest dollar is in China. The highest dollar is in South America. The highest dollar is not in Ukraine. So anyone who thinks that setting up these export terminals and sending our natural gas that could be helping our manufacturing sector overseas is going to help Ukraine's geopolitical situation doesn't understand the geo-economics of it, the geology of it, or the geopolitical implications of it. They have not thought through the totality of what happens when we take our precious resource and we start spreading it around the world.

Some are going to argue that it helps Ukraine. Well, it is going to help China more than it helps Ukraine. It is going to help South America more than it helps Ukraine. It is for sure going to help the CEOs of big oil and gas companies. That is what this debate is really going to be all about. Because we don't captain those ships. ExxonMobil has a tiller for those ships, and those ships are going to steer toward where the highest price is on the world marketplace. When those LNG tankers set sail for Asia or South America, we should know what else we are sending abroad on those ships. American jobs will be on those ships. They will be sailing to other countries. Fighting climate change is on those ships, because we will burn more coal here in the United States rather than natural gas, which has half of the pollutants of coal. We will be increasing the greenhouse gases the United States of America is sending up into the atmosphere.

When we are sending that natural gas overseas, we will be increasing the cost of a conversion of our large bus fleet and our large truck fleet over to natural gas as the fuel which makes it possible to drive them around our country. Here are the statistics. It is quite simple. If we move one-third of our fleet off of oil and on to natural gas as a way of fueling large buses and large trucks, then we back out 1 million barrels of oil—1 million barrels of oil—per day. That is a signal we should be sending to the Middle East. That is a signal

that we are serious, that we are tired of exporting young men and women overseas and getting nothing in return.

So let me summarize by saying this: No. 1, it is a \$62 billion consumer tax. No. 2, it slows our conversion from coal over to oil in our utility industry. No. 3, it slows the conversion of vehicles over to natural gas. No. 4, it slows our manufacturing revolution. No. 5, it slows our economic recovery. Our real strength is in our strong economy fueled by this low-cost oil and natural gas in our country.

We need a huge national debate in our country about the impact on our economy before we start putting it out on the high seas believing, erroneously, it is going to have some huge impact on Ukraine.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

UKRAINE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is one of the most serious breaches of the OSCE principles since the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. These principles are at the foundation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Russia, as a participating state, agreed to hold these principles, including territorial integrity of states, inviolability of frontiers, refraining from the threat of use of force, peaceful settlements of disputes, and others.

With this invasion, which is based, as Secretary Kerry has stated, on a completely trumped-up set of pretexts, Russia has shown its utter contempt for these core principles, indeed, for the entire OSCE process—not only the OSCE but the 1994 Budapest Memorandum signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Ukraine that provides security assurances for Ukraine, the 1997 Ukraine-Russia bilateral treaty, and the U.N. charter, and other international agreements. Russia's military invasion of Ukraine is also a gross violation of the Vienna Document's confidence and security building mechanisms which govern military relations and arms control.

So let's examine Vladimir Putin's justification for this unprovoked invasion. He claims there is a need to protect Russian interests and the rights of Russian-speaking minorities. They characterize it as a human rights protection mission that it clearly is not. Russian officials fail to show any real evidence that the rights of ethnic Russians in Crimea—where they actually constitute a majority and have the most clout politically—and Ukraine at large have been violated. In fact, there is overwhelming evidence that the protests in some Ukrainian cities is being stoked by the Russians.

Putin and other Russian officials make all sorts of unfounded accusations, including that masked militia are roaming the streets of Kiev, although the Ukrainian capital and most

of Ukraine has been calm for the last few weeks. Mr. Putin claims there is a “rampage of reactionary forces, nationalist and anti-Semitic forces going on in certain parts of Ukraine.” Yet Kiev’s chief rabbi and a vice president of the World Jewish Congress on Monday accused Russia of staging anti-Semitic provocations in Crimea.

Mr. Putin accuses Ukraine’s new legitimate transition government—not yet 2 weeks old—of threatening ethnic Russians. Yet there is a myriad of credible reports to the contrary. Indeed, although there has been unrest in some cities, there has been no serious movement in the mostly Russian-speaking eastern and southern regions to join with Russia.

The clear majority of Ukrainians wants to see their country remain unified and do not welcome Russian intervention. All Ukrainian religious groups have come out against the Russian intervention and stand in support of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders, as have minority groups such as the Crimean Tatars and the Roma.

I submit that the real threat posed by the new government is that it wants to assertively move Ukraine in the direction of political and economic reforms and in the direction of democracy, respect for how human rights, the rule of law—away from the unbridled corruption of the previous regime and the kind of autocratic rule found in today’s Russia.

As for protecting Russian interests in Crimea, the Russians have not produced one iota of evidence that the Russian Black Sea Fleet, based in the Crimean city of Sevastopol, is under any kind of threat. Indeed, when the Ukrainians reached out to the Russians to try to engage them peacefully, they have been rebuffed.

Russian authorities need to send their troops back to the barracks and instead engage through diplomacy, not the threat or use of force. The Russian actions pose a threat beyond Ukraine and threaten to destabilize neighboring states.

I pointed out at a hearing we had this week in the subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and in a hearing of the Helsinki Commission, that if Russia can use force to try to change territories, what message does that send to the South China Sea, what message does that send to the Western Balkans?

Just as Poland has already invoked article 4 NATO consultations, the Baltic States and others in the region are wary of Russian goals.

As chairman of the Helsinki Commission and a former vice president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I am encouraged to see active and wide-ranging engagement of the OSCE to de-escalate tensions and to foster peace and security in Ukraine. The OSCE has the tools to address concerns with regard to security on the ground in Crimea, minority rights, and with regard

to preparations for this democratic transition to lead to free and fair elections.

In response to a request by the Ukrainian Government, 18 OSCE participating states, including the United States, are sending 35 unarmed military personnel to Ukraine. This is taking place under the Vienna Document, which allows for voluntary hosting of visits to dispel concerns about unusual military activities.

Various OSCE institutions are activating, at the request of the Ukrainian Government, including the OSCE’s human rights office, known as the ODIHR, to provide human rights monitoring as well as election observation for the May 25 Presidential elections. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the head of the Strategic Police Matters Unit, among others, are all in Kiev this week conducting factfinding missions. A full-scale, long-term OSCE Monitoring Mission is being proposed, and this mission needs to go forward.

All of these OSCE efforts are aimed at deescalating tensions, fostering peace and stability, ensuring the observance of OSCE principles, including the human dimension, helping Ukraine in its transition, especially in the runup to the May elections.

These OSCE on-the-ground efforts are being thwarted by the Russian-controlled newly installed Crimean authorities. The OSCE Unusual Military Activities observers have been stopped from entering Crimea by unidentified men in military fatigues.

Also, the OSCE Media Freedom Representative and her staff were temporarily blocked from leaving a hotel in Crimea where she was meeting with journalists and civil society activists. The U.N. special envoy was accosted by unidentified gunmen after visiting a naval headquarters in the Sevastopol.

The blocking of international monitors—who were invited by the Ukrainian Government and who clearly are trying to seek peaceful resolutions to the conflict—is completely unacceptable and we should hold Russia responsible for their safety.

Russia is a member of the OSCE—one of the founding members—and they are openly violating the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Russia signed on to the institutions that are available under OSCE for this exact type of circumstance—to give independent observation as to what is happening on the ground. Sending this mission, at the request of the host country, into Crimea is exactly the commitments made to reduce tensions in OSCE states, and Russia is blocking the use of that mechanism.

The United States and the international community are deploying wide-ranging resources to contain and roll back Russia’s aggression and to assist Ukraine’s transition to a democratic, secure, and prosperous country. Both the Executive and the Congress

are working around the clock on this. President Obama has taken concrete action and made concrete recommendations.

As the author of the Magnitsky Act, I welcome the White House sanctions announced today, including visa restrictions on officials and individuals threatening Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and financial sanctions against those “responsible for activities undermining democratic processes or institutions in Ukraine.”

It was just a little while ago that we passed the Magnitsky Act. We did that in response to gross human rights violations within Russia against an individual named Sergei Magnitsky. What we did is say that those who were responsible for these gross violations of internationally recognized rules should be held accountable, and if they are not held accountable, the least we can do in the United States is not give them safe haven in our country, not allow the corrupt dollars they have earned to be housed in America—no visas, no use of our banking system. The President is taking a similar action against those responsible for the invasion and military use against international rules in Ukraine.

These steps are in addition to many other actions, including the suspension of bilateral discussions with Russia on trade and investment, stopping United States-Russia military-to-military engagement, and suspending preparations for the June G8 summit in Sochi. Both Chambers are working expeditiously on legislation to help Ukraine in this delicate period of transition. We also need to work expeditiously with our European friends and allies, and I am encouraged by the news that the EU is preparing a \$15 billion aid package.

Ukraine has exercised amazing restraint in not escalating the conflict, particularly in Crimea. I applaud their restraint and their action. The people of Ukraine have suffered an incredibly difficult history, and over the last century they have been subjected to two World Wars, 70 years of Soviet domination, including Stalin’s genocidal famine. They certainly do not need another senseless war. Nothing justifies Russia’s aggression—nothing. Our political and economic assistance at this time would be a testament to those who died at the Maidan just 2 weeks ago and a concrete manifestation that our words mean something and that we do indeed stand by the people of Ukraine as they make their historic choice for freedom, democracy, and a better life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

MANUFACTURING INNOVATION HUBS

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I come to the floor once again to talk about good jobs—about manufacturing jobs—and about what we can do together in this Chamber to strengthen